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SUPREME COURT RENDERS IMPORTANT DECISION PERTAINING TO HIGHWAYS.

(From Friday's Daily.)

The following telegram is self explanatory:

Tallahassee, Fla., March 28, 1916.

Ed. Scott, Arcadia, Fla.
Supreme court in opinion filed today sustains our contention that 15 per cent. of the county licenses collected upon automobiles and other motor driven vehicles should be paid over to the state road department.

T. F. WEST,
Attorney General.

The last legislature passed an act creating the state road department, of which this, the first, congressional district, has the honor of the chairmanship, in the person of Mr. Ed. Scott of this city. This law provided for the appointment of the board of five members, which is authorized to appoint a road commissioner, and their further duties is outlined in sections 4 to 10 of the act, as follows.

The commissioner has not yet been appointed for the reason that a question of the validity of the act was raised, because under another act of the same legislature, all of the auto licenses was placed at the disposal of the county commissioners of the various counties of the state under their regular road fund.

This decision will be hailed with delight not only by the road boosters of the state, but by the boards of commissioners as well. The state road department should become the "clearing house" of ideas and experiences of the county commissioners of the state. Many boards of commissioners are right now puzzling over the intricacies of a contemplated system of road improvements in their respective counties, uncertain as to the advisability or practicability of the plans suggested by their engineer, who will gladly avail themselves of the opportunity to have the state highway engineer give them the benefit of his judgment upon the questions at issue.

Every automobilist in the state should see that his license fee is paid that this work may go on unimpeded, for the emancipation of the state from the great belts of sand or water that isolates the road systems of the various counties, which will never be accomplished in any other way than statewide direction and effort.

To the thinking citizen in any capacity in life in our state the advantages of a connected system of highways must be apparent. Whether by the making of a "home market" for the farmer's produce, or profitable employment of the man employed in the garages of the state, every citizen of Florida will be directly benefitted by the work of this department.

General Duties of Department.

"Sec. 4. It shall be the duty of the department to collect data and information as to all roads in the state, and where practicable have maps and plats thereof made; to investigate and collect data and information as to the best methods and materials for road building and repair; to investigate and gather information as to suitable material for road building and repairing in the different localities of this state; and to compile all such data and information and furnish the same free to the county commissioners of the several counties, and the public.

Sec. 5. The department shall as often as practicable have the Road Commissioner or an assistant, visit the several counties and inspect the roads therein and the methods of road construction and repair and the materials used in building and repairing roads by the county commissioners therein, and make reports thereof to the department. All their records, books, contracts, machinery, implements, materials, properties and premises under the control or jurisdiction of the several boards of county commissioners of the several counties, and the construction or repair of roads shall, at all times, be subject to inspection by the State Road Department, and shall be submitted by such county commissioner for inspection, to the State Road Commissioner, or such assistant as may be detailed to make such inspection. The county commissioners of the several counties in the state shall make and file with the department quarterly reports of and a detailed statement of all moneys expended on such work. Such reports and statements shall be made in such form as the department may prescribe and shall be filed with the department not later than ten days after the last day of the quarter.

"In all cases where the department shall learn that road repair or construction work is being improperly or extravagantly done, or improper or inferior materials are being used in such work, in any county, so as to cause a loss or waste of public funds, it shall be the duty of the department to notify the county commissioners of the same, and point out to them the defects discovered, and if, after such notice is given, the county commissioners continue in the use of such improper methods or materials, the matter shall be reported to the gov-

ernor by the department
To Assist Road Building Upon Request from County.

"Sec. 6. In all cases where the county commissioners of the several counties shall request the advice and assistance of the department in the construction or repair of roads, the department shall whenever practicable send the State Road Commissioner, or an assistant into such county and render all assistance practicable in the premises, without expense to the county except that the actual traveling expenses of the Highway Commissioner or assistant shall be paid by the county requesting such special service.

Attorney General to be Legal Adviser and Compile Laws.

"Sec. 7. It shall be the duty of the Attorney-General of the state to compile the laws of this state relating to roads for the use of the State Road Department. He shall also be the legal adviser of the department and shall render such advice and assistance as may, from time to time, be required to carry out the provisions of this Act

Report to Governor and State Treasurer

"Sec. 8. The department shall report to the governor not later than sixty days before the meeting of the legislature such changes in the law as they find expedient to secure the best results in road construction and repair work. The department shall also render to the state treasurer monthly statements of all moneys expended and shall, before the meeting of the legislature, file with the governor a report of the operation of the department for the preceding two years.

National Aid—Supervision and Expenditure.

"Sec. 9. In case the congress of the United States shall enact any law to aid in the building of roads in the several states and under such law any funds are apportioned to this state, such funds shall be expended under the supervision of the State Road Department.

Source of Maintenance of Department.

"Sec. 10. Fifteen per cent of the amount of all county licenses collected upon automobiles, automobile trucks and other motor driven vehicles shall hereafter be paid over to the State treasurer to be kept in a special fund for the maintenance of the State Road Department, and the same shall be remitted to the State Treasurer as other tax monies are remitted."

DE SOTO COUNTY PRESS ASSOCIATION.

(From Thursday's Daily.)

The DeSoto County Press Association met at the court house in Arcadia March 24th, 1916. The meeting was called to order by the president, A. P. Jordan.

The great advances in all kinds of paper and printing materials, and the probabilities of still greater increases in the present prices, were subjects that occupied a great deal of the time during the session of the association. The estimate sheets now being used by the association and by printers all over the state, were found to be out of date and in need of revision. On motion a committee was appointed by the chair to revise the estimate sheet of the association to conform with the advance in prices all along the line, this sheet to be used as a guide by all members in submitting prices on work.

The following resolutions were adopted:

Must Raise Prices.

Whereas, The cost of paper and printers' inks have advanced in prices from 33 1-3 to 50 per cent., we appeal to all printers and newspaper publishers throughout the state to make a corresponding increase in the prices for work, in order that the trade may not be compelled to carry the burden of this increase.

The Pollution of Peace River.

Resolved, That this association does greatly deplore the pollution of Peace river by the phosphate mines along its course, which pollution is destroying the beauty of the stream, driving away the fish, and thus robbing it of its attraction as a sportsman's paradise. Furthermore, the sediment from the muddy water from the mines is gradually filling up the channel of the stream so as to ultimately result in seriously impairing its usefulness as a drainage outlet for the great scope of country which it traverses.

Resolved, Further, That we present this matter to the attention of Hon. Peter Bradley and Hon. Burdett Loomis, Jr., of the C. H. & N. Railroad, and the said phosphate interests, believing that the great interest they have always manifested in the welfare and development of this great territory, will impel them to make some provision to have this surplus water from the said mines stored and clarified before it is turned into the river, or to handle it in some other manner so as to preserve the beauty, attraction and value of this great wa-

ter course to the country.

Spare the Cabbage Palm.

Resolved, That we deplore the destruction for commercial purposes of the cabbage palm, which distinguishes our country as the semi-tropics, and constitutes to the lover of nature "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." It is the cabbage palms whose gorgeous green lends the greatest glory to the landscape and nods the first greeting of welcome and the last farewell to the Land of Flowers. Surely no one who has experienced the thrill the first sight of its swaying heads sent through him would have the heart to wreak its destruction for a dime; and no one who loves his country as he should would exchange its beauty for a "mess of cabbage."

Resolved, Further, That we appeal to the members of the legislature to enact a law placing a ban upon the sale of these cabbage buds on the markets of the state, and that we urge upon the newspapers and civic organizations of our country to use their influence toward having such a law enacted and enforced.

Marring the Landscape.

Resolved, That we heartily endorse the work of the ladies' clubs in opposition to the sign and bill board nuisance everywhere in evidence in the streets of our cities, and marring the landscape along all our important public highways. We join in the appeal for legislation to abate this nuisance.

Press Meetings No Chautauqua.

Resolved, That we ask each individual newspaper and member of the several press associations of the state to insist that the program of our press meetings shall be confined to business relating to the trade interests, leaving all "chautauqua features" until the business sessions are over, so that we may devote our undivided attention to those things which promote the general good of the profession we represent and the people whom we serve.

Thanking Editor Jones.

Resolved, That we hereby express the deep gratitude we feel for the most excellent dinner and delightful entertainment which this association enjoyed as the guests of Editor E. R. Jones, of the DeSoto County News.

JUDGE WHITNEY WILL NOT AGAIN RUN.

(From Tuesday's Daily.)

The Hon. F. A. Whitney, judge of the tenth judicial circuit, who has been holding court in Polk county for the past several weeks at Bartow, Tuesday addressed the following letter to the editor of the Evening Telegram at Lakeland:

"I am requested, in fact, it was this morning rightfully demanded that I send for publication to you some explicit answers to various questions.

"Three petitions were handed me this morning. It was told me that eight more were on the way. I have already received six in DeSoto county and two resolutions from public meetings, one in Lee county and one in DeSoto county. Some call upon other candidates to retire and some call upon me to announce. I am also told from a large body of citizens that I am to be announced.

"I mention this as justification for me to remain silent no longer, but frankly confess publicly my confused embarrassment and insurmountable reasons for not being a candidate, and why I cannot be one, and asking that I be not further considered.

"I long ago eliminated myself and cannot now with honor become one.

"I have had so much of strife, contention, entanglements, animosities, factionalism and embitterments of others to bear and determine both public and private that I sought to eliminate myself personally from those conditions. I assumed one term with reluctance. I remained in out of appreciation of so much kindness that had been shown me. I never expected to ask a second term. My five years of service has been a very hard and trying one. The principal redeeming feature has been that I have been made to feel that I had given reasonably satisfactory service to the people, but I have repeatedly said that while I, like every one else, know the necessity and desirability of politics to select public servants, that I personally, knowing the nature and burdens of my office, could not assume it or retain it with the confusion, embarrassments and entanglements of politics added to the already heavy burden.

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Feeling this way, and not knowing the interest so many citizens would take, I have become more entangled than if I had personally applied for the office and made a direct appeal for it. The result is I am now farther behind in the work of the office than I have been in four years. The result is also that I cannot honorably be a candidate. The candidates are in no way responsible. I must abide by my own action.

"It is demanded that I state publicly whether I would decline under any circumstances to serve the people.

"I know I'll be subject to criticism (but I cannot help it) for saying that I would be unfit for such an office if I did not meet the complication that I have brought about by declining to run against the two candidates now announced. On the other hand, I would be the principal of ingratitude if I did not say and feel that it would be a privilege to repay all the kind expressions that have been directed towards me, by continued service.

"I must again assure the people of my appreciation in letting me know that I have been reasonably satisfactory to them as an officer, but I realize that I must be highly unsatisfactory as a politician, but must abide the consequences of my own action.

"F. A. WHITNEY."

MULCH CONSERVES MOISTURE.

Do you know how much moisture the Florida sun and March wind can take out of the soil in eight hours? C. K. McQuarrie, state agent for the University of Florida Extension Division, estimates it at one inch. One inch of rainfall is a big rain, yet that amount may escape from the soil every day. At that rate it does not take long to lose the supply available to plants. The longer this evaporation goes on unchecked, the harder it will be to obtain good germination of the seeds.

Mr. McQuarrie has called attention several times to this season as exceptional for the widespread drought. The longer it continues the harder it will be to raise a good crop. The farmer can avert the lack of moisture to some extent, however, by working his land well. Probably 90 per cent. of the winter and spring plowed land lies in the rough state until planting time. The rougher the land, the greater the surface exposed to evaporation. Soil should be worked immediately behind the plow. Use a spike tooth harrow, a disk, a weeder or anything that will level the surface. A mulch should be made and maintained on top.

The Fort Myers Press says the Royal Palm Hotel closed for the season last Saturday after one of the most successful seasons in its history. The Press says further that the hotel will likely open at a much earlier date for the 1916-17 season, probably early in November.

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